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RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 0621
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY 0230
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C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 002235

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR UNDER SECRETARY GLASSMAN AND EAP/PD

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TAGS: [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [OIIP](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: ENCOURAGING CREDIBLE VOICES TO COUNTER VIOLENT
EXTREMISM IN INDONESIA

REF: A. SECSTATE 127045

[1](#)B. JAKARTA 02048

[1](#)C. SECSTATE 114917

Classified By: PAO Michael Anderson for reasons 1.4 (b and d)

[1](#)1. (U) Thank you for the opportunity to share our views on strategic communications and PD work in culturally diverse, strategically located Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority nation and third largest democracy. Embassy's previous Ref B report "winning the 'war of ideas' in Indonesia" outlined the Indonesian worldview--much different from that of the Middle East--and the need to tailor our message for this special audience. Our responses to Ref A questions follow.

[1](#)2. (C) To what extent does your Country Team work together to produce and manage a unified contact list/contact management system?

-- Embassy Jakarta has a good, centralized contact database with approximately 17,000 names. The Public Affairs Section (PAS) maintains about 6,500 names in the system, which is used by most Mission elements to distribute information and develop guest lists.

[1](#)3. (C) To what extent do credible and influential host country individuals and institutions publicly support our messaging efforts in countering violent extremism?

-- Indonesia, although a young democracy, has proven to be a reliable partner in the war on terrorism. The country offers unique opportunities to find allies and build support for international values of tolerance and non-violence. Most Indonesians have a tolerant, non-violent world view. They largely reject radical views of small minority groups, such as Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) or Front Pembela Islam (FPI, the Islamic Defenders Front). Although many Indonesians disagree with our foreign policy, they are eager to engage and are not "anti-American." Many key individuals and institutions, including representatives of government bodies, media, NGOs, business groups and religious and academic organizations support our messages opposing extremism and terrorism and supporting democracy and human rights. However, we have found it more effective when these messages are disseminated as independent Indonesian or official GOI views rather than

appearing to originate from the U.S. Government. Post-colonial Indonesians are proud and highly nationalist and want to be perceived as independent, non-aligned and self-sufficient. They rarely speak out in direct support of USG policies and pressing them to do so can be counter-productive.

¶4. (C) What is the impact of these individuals and institutions on public opinion and government policies in your host country?

-- Outspoken individuals and institutions encompass a wide range of views and ideas. Generally, those who speak out against extremism and terrorism have a positive impact; those who speak out in support of democracy have an even greater impact. However, public statements by any institution or individual perceived as "anti-Muslim" or U.S. meddling can have a negative impact on public opinion. Support for U.S.-held values such as tolerance, human rights and democracy are commonly heard and are effective when the message does not appear to be driven by the outside. Views concerning "press freedom" understandably are well received, particularly by the media. Indonesia's two largest mass Muslim organizations, Muhammadiyah and Nadhlatul Ulama-with 90 million members-often hold conferences and promote the importance of inter-faith dialogue both within Indonesia and across the world. They welcome western participation in these events.

¶5. (C) How and to what extent do you encourage them to speak out?

-- The Embassy regularly meets with its vast array of contacts either individually or in small groups, invites them to Embassy events, attends locally-hosted events or meets informally. The Embassy often provides background materials on key policy issues and shared concerns to GoI counterparts. When appropriate, the Embassy uses its contacts to urge the GoI to make public statements in support of key issues, particularly on UNSC or IAEA votes and the Ambassador places op-ed pieces in local media. However, our most concrete successes center on cooperation in areas that are important to the Indonesian people, e.g. economic stability, food security, education, environment, public health, good governance, anti-corruption, social justice, and science and technology. Rather than focusing on issues that divide us, we stress and demonstrate our broad areas of commonality. Our message is more effective when Indonesians take ownership and when delivered with an Indonesian voice.

¶6. (C) How do you identify and cultivate individuals you believe can serve as credible voices?

-- The Embassy employs various methods to identify and cultivate potential credible voices. We actively seek good candidates for our various exchange programs through the media and by attending a wide range of local events; and indirectly through recommendations from contacts and groups we know and respect. We create opportunities for dialogue with Indonesians through representational and outreach events, including students and young professionals, most recently on issues such as free and fair elections--an issue of utmost importance to them. Mission outreach is a high priority and officers are encouraged to visit universities, Islamic schools and organizations both in and around Jakarta, Surabaya and Medan. Special efforts are made to get to relatively isolated places like Papua, Kalimantan and parts of Sulawesi and Sumatra. We identify mid-career and up-and-coming leaders by working with various organizations. Our cooperation with PACOM's Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS) and the East-West Center are prime examples of these successes.

¶7. (C) What sort of list of credible voices do you maintain now and how many names are on that list?

-- As previously stated, Mission maintains a centralized contact database with approximately 17,000 names, 6,500 of

which come from the Public Affairs Section (PAS). This database is used by most Mission elements to distribute information and develop guest lists for a myriad of Embassy-sponsored events. Informally, the Embassy is aware of which key individuals, NGO leaders, Parliamentarians, journalists, or organizations are sympathetic to, and supportive of, specific U.S. policies or our various messages.

18. (C) What type of person or sections of society are the most influential credible voices in your host country?

-- Indonesia is a large and diverse country. Consequently, credible voices can be found and cultivated on all levels of society. Some examples include, select senior government officials, Muslim religious leaders (including imams and madrasah and pesantren teachers); Chairs of the two largest, most credible and moderate mass Muslim organizations -- Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah; prominent television and national print media figures, personalities, cultural figures, intellectuals, major political party leaders, think-tank researchers, NGO activists, and influential business persons.

-- We use our assistance, exchange and outreach programs to assist moderate mainstream groups spread their message of tolerance, which reinforces our interest and serves to spread our message. Mission and PD programs strive to counter undemocratic and militant views; expose Indonesians to tolerance and support for religious freedom; and increase understanding of U.S. culture, society and foreign policy. Mission is actively helping this young democracy implement democratic reform and adjust to globalization. Education is

crucial to this transition. Therefore, USAID and PD programs work with Indonesian educators at all levels to develop and encourage critical thinking and reform at both basic education and university levels. The MCC process and efforts by partners like the Asia Foundation, the American Council of Young Political Leaders (ACYPL), and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) help Indonesian's participate more effectively in democratic governance and civil society.

19. (C) How do you work with other Embassy sections in these efforts?

--Successful PD efforts in the complex Indonesian environment require a high degree of coordination and integration within the Mission and receive full support from the Ambassador who encourages all officers to do outreach. Both the Public Affairs Officer and the Information Officer attend a daily Country Team meeting, which ensures good communication. PAS is actively involved in preparation of the annual MSP and serves on several Mission working groups on key issues, including rewards for justice and counter-terrorism. PAS also coordinates with both USAID's Development and Outreach Communications Officer (DOC) to promote our development assistance efforts and with a modest PACOM Military Information support team. The Public Affairs section also supports the Mission's FBI and the Department of Justice International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP).

110. (C) What traditional Public Diplomacy programs and products do you use in your efforts to identify and encourage credible voices?

-- Mission uses a wide variety of PD programs and products tailored for target audiences on specific topics. Some of our most important include, IIP products (such as PAS-translated electronic journals), the international visitor program (IVLP), speakers, Fulbright exchanges, YES High School exchanges, English ACCESS micro-scholarships for disadvantaged youth, reprinting books in Indonesian, and the use of small democracy grants. Our network of American Corners provides reference materials and programs for faculty and students on 11 major university campuses across the country and is vital to our outreach program. Fulbright English Teaching Assistants work with local teachers in

public, private and Islamic high schools throughout the country and Mission's English Language Fellow teaches English to officers at the National Police Academy. Outreach to Muslim audiences through special TV programs, English teaching, and book reprints and other resource material donations is sustained through "pilot country" funds received from R.

¶11. (C) What additional support can/should Washington provide in these efforts?

-- PAS needs several additional locally-employed staff positions in order to bolster programming and support more youth and Muslim outreach across Indonesia; strengthen contacts with our numerous alumni; and do more with Indonesian language media (including TV and regional publications) and book reprints. We hope "Pilot Country" funding can continue. Post needs its core Fulbright budget expanded so more Indonesian scholars can study in America. We do not need more "boutique programs", but more resources for our traditional flagship scholarship program. Our "Education USA" student advising service is poorly funded and staffed. We need to increase the number of Indonesians at U.S. Universities (the latest IIE data show only 7,692 Indonesian students on our campuses), and that requires a more pro-active, nation-wide marketing effort to offset misperceptions the U.S. does not welcome Muslims and that it is too difficult to qualify for a U.S. visa. We need restoration of the ECA office responsible for fostering university linkages. The increased high demand for more English language programs and products necessitates a full-time versus regional English Language Officer. Additional staff training is crucial, particularly with

regard to new media.

-- Our most effective PD program is the IVLP, which currently funds 45-50 visitors per year to the U.S. With increased funding, we could easily fill 25 additional IVLP slots. We also need a larger "I-Bucks" budget from IIP and more yearly Strategic Speaker Initiatives (SSI)-the current limit is three. Finally, the Department should follow up on Secretary Gates' suggestion in his November 26, 2007 Kansas State University speech outlining the need to dramatically increase funding for non-military foreign affairs programs, including diplomacy and strategic communications. In particular, he noted that more needs to be done to tap the U.S military's vast resources for use in civilian PD work and strategic communications.

¶12. (C) Fostering credible voices in Indonesia requires continued strategic communications, particularly when focused on concrete areas of importance to the Indonesian people. Our focus on building strategic partnerships in the areas education, health, the environment and good governance should remain the focus of our Mission and public diplomacy outreach efforts in Indonesia.

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